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SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
SB 300: SPECIAL EDUCATION – LEARNING CONTINUITY PLAN-REQUIREMENT  
Hearing date: January 27, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to share my family story and testify in support of Senate Bill 300. My son Jackson is a Sophomore at Atholton High School. Jackson was diagnosed with Williams Syndrome at an early age, but more recently with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Over the past 5 years, Jackson has greatly struggled with behavioral problems in school, due to significant delays in communication and social skills.

When school first went to virtual in April 2020, the school system determined what goals in Jackson's IEP that could be supported virtually. Unfortunately, they determined they could only support 25% of his goals and objectives. Although this figure has increased to 56% for this school year, there are still several key areas that still have not been met virtually. These goals and objectives center around: self-management, behavior and self-regulation, and social interaction/communication skills. If a continuity of learning plan would have been developed before an emergency, it would have enabled greater team collaboration and problem solving on how more of these goals/objectives could be met in the home setting. Instead, the burden is being placed on parents to fill in the supports and services that the schools are unable to provide.

Our family, seeing that Jackson was greatly struggling in these areas and regressing in the progress he had been making at school, realized that we could not wait a year to a year and a half for him to go without support. We made the decision to hire a certified ABA Therapist to come to our home twice a week for 2 hours/week to work 1 on 1 with Jackson in these areas. We also plan to use the therapist to assist us with gathering data and setting goals for Jackson in these areas when we return to brick and mortar.

By passing this bill, it will ensure that schools have a plan to fully implement the IEP when students are unable to go back to brick and mortar for a prolonged period of time. By failing to support all of the student's goals and objectives this will most likely lead to significant learning loss of skills that can be very difficult to recover. Supporting this bill will support our most vulnerable children and enable them to get the education necessary to be successful upon exiting the school system. Please support SB 300.